(b) whether in the present industrial and economic climate, employment generation on a significant scale can take place in the unorganised sector, mainly agriculture;

(c) whether the promotion of agricultural growth should be the focus of Government policy; and

(d) if so, whether public investment should shift from subsidization of agricultural inputs to investment in irrigation and land development and, if so, what steps Government intend to take in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

Despite some shifts in occupational structure in favour of secondary and tertiary sectors during the last two decades, agriculture still occupies a predominant place in employment structure employing about two-third of the total workers and bulk of employment opportunities will have to accrue in unorganised sector including agriculture.

(c) The Government attaches high priority to agriculture. Eighth Plan aims at not only achieving self-sufficiency in food but also generating surplus of specific Agricultural commodities for export.

(d) The Government aims at reducing subsidies and rationalising farm inputs prices so as to divert larger resources for investment in agriculture and irrigation.

Seed Producing Companies

7122. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTUR be pleased to state:

(a) the seed producing companies which are working in collaboration with foreign companies;

(b) what variety of seeds these companies are selling at present alongwith their quantity; and

(c) what variety of seeds is imported by them annually with details of their quantity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) At present there are fifty seed producing companies working in collaboration with foreign companies.

(b) and (c) The collaborations of these companies have been approved mainly for production of hybrid Sunflower seeds, vegetable seeds, propagating material of trees, shrubs and ornamental flowers and seeds and seedlings of agro-forestry. Details of companywise seed sales are not available. The quantity of seeds imported into the country was 428.390. 148.082 and 235.064 MTs in the year 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 (Upto December, 93) respectively. The imported seeds pertained mainly to vegetable seeds like cabbage, tomato and cauliflower etc., sunflower, flower seeds, oramental palm seeds, and forest seeds etc.

Subsidy on Plant Projective Chemicals

7123. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Sector/Centrally sponsored schemes subsidy on Plant Protection Chemical allowed by them for various schemes are not on a uniform pattern;

(b) whether it is a fact that in some schemes the subsidy is @ 25 per cent of the cost and in some @50 per cent; and if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Rajasthan Government have approached the Central Government time and again over this matter but with no result and no decision has been taken so far; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and by when the revision of the pattern of subsidy of plant protection chemicals is likely to take place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The incidence of pests, diseases and weeds varies from crop to crop. Accordingly, assistance for plant protection chemicals was extended at different rates under different crop production schemes.

(c) and (d) The grant of assistance on plant protection chemicals has been reviewed and rationalised under some of the schemes. Besides, the scope of Central assistance for promotion and adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) has been enlarged.

Area under Foodgrains and Horticulture Crops

7124. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the area under cultivation of foodgrains and horticulture crops in the country;

(b) the number of farmers engaged in the production of foodgrains and horticulture Crops;

(c) the increase in Budget provisions or agriculture in the Central Budget for 1994-95;

(d) whether it is a fact that the increased provision will benefit only big farmers; and

(e) how Government propose to ensure welfare of small and marginal farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) According to Land Use Statistics 1990-91 (latest available), the area under cultivation of foodgrains and horticulture (which includes fruits, vegetables, condiments and spices, spices, coconut, drugs, narcotics and other plantation crops) was 140.20 million hectares.

(b) The total number of farmers engaged in the production of foodgrains and horticulture crops is not available. However, the number of cultivators producing all crops is placed at 110.6 million.

(c) Plan allocation for agriculture for 1994-95 has been increased by Rs. 90|- crores over 1993-94.

(d) The increased budget provision would benefit all the farmers including small and marginal farmers.

(e) There is a condition in the implementation of the crop oriented programmes that as far as possible, the benefit should flow to the small and marginal farmers and 25 per cent of benefit should flow to SC and ST farmers.

Cashewnut Production

7125. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to newsitem captioned "Cashew growers in dire straits as prices slumps" which appeared in the 'Indian Express' dated 22nd April, 1994; if so, what is the reaction of Government thereon;

(b) what has been cashew nut production in the country during the last three years, year-wise and state-wise figures;

(c) what has been the highest and lowest prices of raw cashew nuts during this period, year-wise and State-wise figures;

(d) whether the Central Government initiated any scheme or steps